Look sort of close, and see if you notice anything."

She did as he bade. After a moment her lips parted and her eyes looked startled.

"Why—why, Sam—"

"I thought you'd notice," Sam said. "The room ain't the same shape. It's a heap bigger than the parlor used to be, and the windows ain't the same; but I fixed it up as near as I could, with all I could find that hadn't been broke up or lost."

Again she stirred. She was not comfortable. It was a long gap her memory had been made to bridge so suddenly.

"It beats all," Sam said, "how many of the things we used to have had somethin' human tied up with 'em. Them wasn't the days when I just left it to you to get whatever you wanted and let the bills come in. When we bought anything, you and me would spend a heap of time pickin' it out and figurin' if we could afford it. That bed was the first thing in the house we ever paid for all at once. It made me feel mighty smart. And there was a lot that was give to us—that tidy your hand's foolin' with, on the arm of the chair—Bert Stults' girl Sally crocheted that for you, the time you was settin' up nights with her. She never got the mate to it finished, and her mother wanted to keep that one, because it was the last thing Sally done. Do you mind?

"And there's that picture of the boy Christ. Old Brady's kids used to like that one, when they had it home; they said he looked as if he'd be a real nice boy to play with. They made us take it after we'd been totin' 'em rice puddin' and truck when they was all gettin' well of the measles."

HIS mood changed suddenly; the lines of his big face set.

"Molly, Molly!" he cried. "You've lived that down, somehow. I haven't. New things got to interestin' you: havin' more money, and doin' more things with it—bigger things, mebbe, in a way. I've kept right on lovin' the old way. I wish to God I was back in it now. Yes, I do! Right back there in the time when I'd just made sure I was goin' to win out, and when we hadn't got over havin' to be careful, and when your face hadn't got done with lookin' anxious and wishful. I loved it! That was when I was a man, and not just a mark. That was the only time in my life I could afford to be friendly, because then was the only time I knew who my friends were.

"You and me never have been as close as we was then—not as close to each other, nor as close to other folks. That's what I like—bein' close to folks, and givin' little things to 'em because you love 'em, and gettin' little things from 'em because they love you. That's the humanness of it—lovin', and bein' loved back. What does this kind of givin' get you? It gets you just what you give. And that ain't love. If I'd have given Fosdyke his money, the lovin'est thing I could have said to him would have been to take it and go to the devil with it. That's the way I felt. But that ain't what I want."

TOM drew close to her side, laying his big hand upon her head, compelling her eyes to meet his.

"Molly, when did you ever know of love really hinderin' anything? Honest, are you willin' to grow away from it? How much love are you gettin' out of this?"

Their eyes held, his full of entreaty, hers full of awakening wonder. Slowly, heavily, he knelt and bent his shaggy head upon the chair-arm, where lay the "tidy" the fingers of Bert Stults' Sally had made and given in love and gratitude. A tremor of feeling shook him. His wife put out her hand, touched his tumbled hair lightly, then flung her arms about him with a cry:

"Sam, don't! Sam! Why, Sam!"

Kritt and the Lady Holsteins

By SEWELL FORD

Illustrations by F Vaux Wilson

THERE'S times when I wish I had a job in a signal tower, or at a ticket window—some place where people pass quick and are shot along before you get to know too much about 'em. You might not think, either, that runnin' a physical culture studio would rub you so close to folks. But some way it does. And say, the closer you see 'em, the more you need to be able to grin. Take Forbes Latham.

He's a young plute that Pinckney tows in because he'd found him dinin' on crackers and milk at the club. A tall, keen-eyed party, this Mr. Latham, with a serious, stand-offish air. But Pinckney don't let that affect his frivolous nature.

"Behold, Shorty," says he, "a war-battered hero."

"Oh, I say!" protests Mr. Latham.

"Fact!" insists Pinckney. "If it wasn't for the war you'd still be a normal human being, available for week-ends occasionally. As it is, you spend your time signing contracts to produce high explosives at a profit that ought to make you feel like a pickpocket. It's making so much money that he doesn't need, Shorty, which has brought him to this state."

"Rubbish!" says Latham. "I'm perfectly fit, I tell you."

"With no appetite, and sleeping but three hours a night!" goes on Pinckney.

"A little touch of nerves, perhaps," admits Latham.

HE being a friend of Pinckney's, I soaks him my top price and arranges a session that makes him think he's gettin' his money's worth. In a week or so Mr. Forbes Latham has worked up an appetite for real food and is hittin' the floss reg'lar. Also his ego ain't so prominent. He tells me he means to keep on trainin', while business is so strenuous, anyway.

"It's rather a strain," says he, "and I am depending on you, Professor, to pull me through—on you and my Holsteins."

"Your which?" says I.

Then he proceeds to tell me about his model dairy farm up in Connecticut. It's his big hobby.

"I'll bring up some photos of my new buildings," says he, "and one or two of Lady Blanche de Nimours."

"If she's one of them cigarette-smokin' foreign dames," says I, "take my advice and duck."

But it seems Lady Blanche is only the pride of the herd, with a milk-givin' record that I forget.

Every time we come to a breathin' spell he'll drag in that dairy farm of his and try to pin me down to a date when I'll go out and inspect it.

That's what he was at one afternoon when Swifty comes into the gym and reports a stranger in the front office.

"Rummy-lookin' gink, too," says Swifty.

"Then sweep him out," says I. "Want me to do the janitor work, do you?"

"Ahr-r-r-r, chee!" says Swifty. "Wot's the use gettin' messy? Didn't I say how he wants to see Mr. Latham?"

"Me?" says Forbes. "What name?"

"Wouldn't give any," says Swifty.

"Oh, well!" says I. "I'll go."

AND say, Swifty ain't exaggerated any. What I find standin' sort of limp and wavery in the front office is a sorry-lookin' specimen. I expect before his cheeks caved in he was one of these square-heads. He has a young-old look, anywhere between twenty-five and fifty, and there's a weary, hopeless sag to his shoulders. Not the kind of caller Forbes Latham would want to see.

"Who put you next to his being here?" I demands.

"I—I happens to see him comin' up a while ago," says the stranger. "I waited downstairs for a spell. Then it—it took me some time to climb the stairs. My—my wind."

"Huh!" says I. "What's the name?"

"Kritt," says he.

"Swell monicker," says I. "Well, Kritt, what do you want of Mr. Latham?"

"I—I just want to see him, that's all," says Kritt.

"How interestin'!" says I. "Think he wants to see you?"

Kritt ain't sure on that.

"Then you'd better check out," says I. "Try at his office to-morrow."

Kritt stares at me sort of dumb and wooden, but he makes no move to go.

"I—I got to see him to-day," says he.

Well, we debates that point four or five minutes. Then I gives up.

"I'll ask Mr. Latham," says I. "He must be dressed by now. Wait here."

But when I describes the party to Forbes, and tells the name, he says he never heard of any such guy.

"Let's see what the fellow's like," says he, and follows me into the next room.

One look and he turns away disgusted.

"Never saw him before," says he. "Send him off."

I've always got more curiosity than sense, though, in such cases. I has to go on askin' questions.

"See here, you," says I. "What do you mean, trailin' in here after a stranger?"

"I know *him*, all right," insists Kritt. "Worked for him more'n a year."

"Oh!" says Latham. "One of the hands, eh? It's possible. Where were you?"

"In the tolly shop," says Kritt.

"I see," says Latham. Then he turns to me. "Their name for trinitrotoluol. Tolly! Rather good, eh?"

"Easier on the tongue," says I. "But what's the rest of it, Kritt? Were you fired, or what?"

"I got the sickness," says he—"the tolly sickness. Fumes in the lungs. Been in the hospital three weeks."

"They get careless," explains Latham; "we have a lot of cases like that. But you were well taken care of at the hospital, weren't you, my man?"

Kritt nods. "I wish I hadn't been," says he. "They turned me out—like this."

Forbes Latham shrugs his shoulders.

"You knew the risks when you went into the shop, didn't you?" he demands. "And you got your three dollars a day, double wages for unskilled labor. We can't do any more for you. Sorry. You'll be all right in a few days."

KRITT still stands there, blinkin' stupid.

"Can't you get back to your folks?" says I.

"I—I wouldn't go to 'em—this way," says he. "I'd rather die."

"How about friends?" I suggests. "Where were you workin' before you went into this tolly shop?"

"Grocery, Asbury Park," says he.

"What!" says I. "Left a nice summer resort and a cinch job to go mixin' up bomb-stuffin'?"

"It was the three a day," says Kritt. "I needed that to—to— Well, there was Anna."

"Sure!" says I. "There generally is an Anna. Somebody's second girl, was she?"

"She was cashier in the grocery," says he. "I was sending most of my wages to her. When I'd saved up three hundred we was to have—"

"I get you," says I. "Took a cash reserve to ring the wedding bells for Anna. German, I'll bet?"

Kritt nods. "But—but I'm like this now," says he. "I can't get a job at anything."

"Oh, you'll find something," says Latham careless. "Here's a dollar."

Kritt stares at it and then shakes his head.

"If—if you could find me a place," says he, "until I get strong again. Maybe something outdoors."

"Why, say," I breaks in, "what's the matter with sendin' him up to that bloomin' cow farm of yours?"

Hit me as a happy little idea, but Latham don't warm up to it at all. He explains how he has only experts to look after his fancy stock, graduates of agricultural schools, and that a wreck like Kritt wouldn't fit in at all.

"'I got the sickness,' says Kritt—'fumes in the lungs. Been in the hospital three weeks.'"

"Wouldn't, eh?" says I. "Then fit him in. For, if you must know how I feel about it, this dumpin' your fact'ry waste on the street strikes me as kind of cold-blooded. I wouldn't treat a dog that way."

Latham squirms a bit at that, and flushes up some under the eyes. All of a sudden he shrugs his shoulders again and remarks casual: "Oh, well! Perhaps my farm superintendent can find something for him to do. I'll write him a note."

"Better make it an order," says I.

I sees to it, too, that Kritt has carfare and is started on his way.

FOR a few days Latham don't mention his farm again. But he can't keep off the subject for long. He begins once more urgin' me to go out with him.

"Maybe next week I will," says I.

As it happens, it wasn't until here the other day that I runs out of excuses and gets cornered. So after lunch Latham picks me up in a taxi, and by three o'clock we've made two changes and have been

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